DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 381 425 SO 024 655

AUTHOR Fitzhugh, William P.
TITLE Celebrating Geography: Geography in Everyday Life.
PUB DATE Oct 94
NOTE 18p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Maryland Council for the Social Studies (Annapolis, MD, October 1994).
PUB TYPE Speeches/Conference Papers (150) -- Guides - Classroom Use - Teaching Guides (For Teacher) (052)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Early Childhood Education; Elementary Education; Elementary School Curriculum; *Geographic Concepts; *Geographic Location; *Geography; *Geography Instruction; *Social Studies; Teaching Methods

ABSTRACT

The paper suggests that the five fundamental themes of geography can serve as a good starting point for understanding how geography affects lives everyday in every way. Geography serves to remind people how interwoven geographic concepts are in individuals' lives. Ten activities are suggested to incorporate the five fundamental themes into a literature-based program. Some of the activities introduce vocabulary and geography to students in a non-traditional way. Other activities include biographies of family migration, songs, speech, dispersion of animals throughout the world, foods, clothing, dogs of the world, fabric, literature, and an ice-breaking activity requiring participants to locate places on a map. (EH)

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ED 381 425

CELEBRATING GEOGRAPHY:

GEOGRAPHY IN EVERYDAY LIFE

WILLIAM P. FITZHUGH

Fitzhugh, W. (1994, Oct.) Celebrating geography: Geography in everyday life. Paper presented at the annual conference of the Maryland Council for the Social Studies. Annapolis, MD.

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CELEBRATING GEOGRAPHY:

GEOGRAPHY IN EVERYDAY LIFE

In everyday life, we take the importance of geography for granted. Yet, the impact of geography cannot be ignored. As teachers, we need to be aware of the impact geography has in almost every facet of life. School is a good place to introduce geography in everyday life and its continuing importance throughout our lives and the lives of our students. Vocabulary development goes hand in hand with geography education.

The five fundamental themes of geography can serve as a good starting point for understanding how geography affects our lives everyday in every way. The activities introduced below serve as starting points for understanding how far reaching geography's impact is on our lives. Students and teachers may need more practice in each of these skill areas to understand this impact fully. These activities may be too difficult for many students. They serve as "ideas" for teachers to use and think about. These activities increase our knowledge of geography's impact on our language. Geography serves to remind us of how interwoven geographic concepts are in our lives.

The first fundamental theme is LOCATION. Whenever we give or receive directions, we use the theme of location. This theme can be introduced to students as part of literature based reading. In the story "Lyle, the Crocodile" the author purposely gives an exact location- East 88th St., New York City, as the setting of the story. The setting is a geographical concept. In each activity locate the country on the map and discuss the vocabulary word under discussion. Locating the place and talking about the word reinforces both.

The second theme is that of PLACE. The author in a text creates a sense of mood by describing a place so vividly that the reader feels as if he/she were there. The opening chapter of "Rebecca" describes such a place. How often people, while visiting new places, think back to the settings authors have described in novels. At an elementary level, "The Secret Garden" is an excellent example of how the theme of place sets the mood for the story. As Mary matures, we see the changes the children bring about in their garden. Describing words affect the sense of place in literature.

The third geographical theme is one of MOVEMENT. Ideas, concepts, languages, and vocabulary move. English has borrowed many words from other languages. Without the addition of words from other languages our

own language would seem dull and lifeless. Many of the activities included later in this article reinforce the concept of movement. Our language is dependent upon other languages for its colorfulness.

"Mike Mulligan and His Steam shovel" is a good book to use when introducing the concept of movement to students. This book was written over fifty years ago. It still has literary merit and does a fantastic job of teaching the theme of movement to students. Of course, there are newer texts available, but many "classics" deserve to be read and reread by succeeding generations.

The ENVIRONMENT places an increasingly important part of science curriculum. The changes man has wrought on the environment and the ways man has adapted to his environment are important parts of geography. "The Great Kapok Tree" is a good book to introduce children to the concept of human environmental interaction.

The last theme is that of PLACE. "The Story About Ping", written over fifty years ago, is a good literature based text to introduce this concept to children. There are many examples of location, place, environment, and movement in this book which teach children about life in China. The illustrations are adequate, but I recommend cutting pictures out of the National Geographic Magazine to augment the text. The photographs in the magazine better show the themes of geography to the children. A good discussion of illustration techniques can evolve from comparing the artist's technique with actual photographs.

AT THE BEGINNING OF THE YEAR THE TEACHERS NEEDS TO PUT A LARGE WORLD MAP UP IN FRONT OF THE ROOM. AS THE YEAR PROGRESSES AND CHILDREN READ STORIES FROM DIFFERENT COUNTRIES THE COUNTY OF ORIGIN OF EACH STORY SHOULD BE LOCATED AND LABELED ON THE MAP. BY THE END OF THE YEAR THE CHILDREN WILL HAVE TRAVELED AROUND THE WORLD."

Examples of each of these activities are reproduced later in the article. These activities are a fun way to introduce vocabulary and geography to students.

THE GEOGRAPHY OF ME AND MY FAMILY offers students the opportunity to write an autobiographical sketch with a geographic emphasis. As the story is written, students locate and label the places in their lives on maps of the United States and World. The finished biographies should be displayed in the school to share with parents and other students. A book of first names from the library is necessary to complete this activity. Input from parents is

always helpful. This activity can serve as an interactive homework assignment for students.

THE GEOGRAPHY OF SONG introduces children to geography and music. Many songs which we recall memorably have geography in them. Singing the song and showing children the location of the place in the song is important.

DOWN ON THE FARM WITH GEOGRAPHY introduces teachers and students to the fact that farm animals were bred in different parts of the world. Many animals were developed for a specific purpose and are better adapted to one region than another.

TRITE BUT TRUE GEOGRAPHY demonstrates the impact of geography o our everyday speech. These bromides have passed into everyday speech and have geographic (sometimes historical) origins. The richness of our language depends on the use of expressions such as these.

EDIBLE GEOGRAPHY show how our culture has borrowed from the dietary habits of other regions of the world. Our diet would be bland without contributions from many countries. There are many more examples available. A tasting party can accompany this lesson. Locations of countries from which we have borrowed these dishes should be found an labeled on the map. Reading food labels is another good way to introduce children to the concept of eating your way around the world. At trip to the super market for this purpose would be a great way to spend a long afternoon. Our economy is dependent on foods from other places. Imagine the long winter without grapes from Chile or no bananas from Costa Rica.

THINGS TO WEAR WITH GEOGRAPHY teachers us that many articles of clothing with which we are familiar and perhaps wear everyday were originally worn in a particular region of the world.

GOING TO THE DOGS WITH GEOGRAPHY presents pets in a new light. Most dog owners are only too happy to discuss the origin and pedigree of their pets. Magazine pictures of each pet placed next to the country of origin on a bulletin board is a great way to introduce the concept of place to children. Asking "why" each animal was bred for a specific purpose helps children develop critical thinking skills.

ALL DRESSED UP AND READY TO GO WITH GEOGRAPHY introduces students to

the fabric of life. The kinds of clothing we wear are made with different fabrics.

GEOGRAPHY AND LITERATURE builds upon the theme of place. The setting of the story has an impact on the characterization and plot. Think of the location of each of these stories. How would the action change in a different locale?

GEOGRAPHY WARMS US UP is a method of helping members of a staff development training session gets to know each other as well as a means of getting participants to think geographically. Items can be added at will. Locating the places on the map helps participants see the amount of geography which is part of them. Each item can be used separately in the classroom. Children can have parents help them complete this activity as homework. The data for each item can be plotted and labeled on the map. Numbers for each category can be tallied. The tallies can be used to make graphs. This becomes your geography/mathematics connection!

THE GEOGRAPHY OF ME AND MY FAMILY TREE

Each child will write the sentence starter on his/her paper. Parents can help the child answer the fill-in-the-blank questions. Write the answer out so the child can see what the whole word looks like. Locate each place on the map of the U.S. or world. Recopy the story and paste together.

1. I live in _____.

2. I was born in _____.

3. Last year we went to visit_____.

4. If I could visit any place in the world it would be_____.

5. If I could live any place in the world it would be _____.

6. My last name is _____.

7. My ancestors came from_____.

8. My first name is_____.

9. It comes from a language spoken in _____.

10. My name means _____.

11. I have relatives who live in _____,_____,

and _____.

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THE GEOGRAPHY OF SONG

Write the location of each song. Find the location on your map.

The Yellow Rose of _____

My Old _____ Home

The Blue _____ Waltz

Oh, _____ I Want to Hear You

_____ On My Mind

Born in the _____

I Left My Heart in _____

Remember the _____ Valley

Shuffle Off to _____

_____ Dreamin'

When _____ Eyes Are Smiling

Arrivederci _____

Little Old Lady From _____

A Foggy Day in _____ Town

April in _____

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_____ Uber Alles

Bye Bye Miss _____ Pie

All My Xes Line in _____

Back Home Again in _____

Deep in the Heart of _____

My Kind of Town, _____ Is

_____

Write on of your own to share

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down on the farm... and other places with geography

1. _____ horse

2. _____ chicken

3. _____ pig

4. _____ cow

5. _____ cow

6. _____ hen

7. _____ goose

8. _____ sheep

9. _____ goat

10. _____ cat

11. _____ deerhound

12. _____ terrier

13. _____ husky

14. _____ guniea pig

15. _____

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TRITE BUT TRUE GEOGRAPHY

1. like carrying coals to _____

2. being sent to _____

3. buying swampland in _____

4. the big apple is _____

5. from here to _____

6. dig a well all the way to _____

7. exiled to _____

8. the source of the _____

9. show me! I'm from _____

10. but will it play in _____

11. as dry as the _____

12. all roads lead to _____

13. something's rotten in _____

14. when in _____ do as the _____ do

15.

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edible geography

1._____ cheese

2. salad _____

3. _____ ham

4. _____= hot dog

5. _____= ground beef

6. _____ bread

7. _____ sausage

8. _____ muffin

9. _____ baked beans

10._____ taffy

11.

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It helps to have swatches of material available. Then students can paste the swatch near the country of origin and draw an arrow to the country. Designing the fabric helps as in the case of paisley or madras.

THINGS TO WEAR WITH GEOGRAPHY

Write the country of origin of each article of clothing. Locate the country on your map. Illustrate each article of clothing. Having examples of each article makes the lesson more authentic.

1. beret_____

2. sombrero_____

3. fez_____

4. turban_____

5. toque_____

6. serape_____

7. djelbah_____

8. kimono_____

9. kilt_____

10. sari_____

11. moccasin_____

GOING TO THE DOGS WITH GEOGRAPHY

Name the country of origin of each of the following dogs. Locate the country on your map of the U.S. or the world. Is there a dog for each continent?

1. _____ setter

2. _____ shepherd

3. _____ terrier

4. _____ cattle dog

5. _____ spaniel

6. _____ husky

7. _____ malemute

8. _____ foxhound

9. _____ ridgeback

Think of an example of your own _____

All Dressed Up And Ready To Go With Geography

I use this activity with "Corduroy" and "A Pocket for Corduroy", both by Don Freeman.

LOCATE THE COUNTRY OF ORIGIN FOR EACH OF THE FOLLOWING.

1. cashmere_____

2. damask_____

3. jersey_____

4. khaki_____

5. batik_____

6. paisley_____

7. corduroy_____

8. madras_____

9. denim_____

10. calico_____

11. tweed_____

12. peau de soie_____

GEOGRAPHY AND LITERATURE

Write the setting of each story. Find the setting on your world map.

The Elves and the Shoemaker

Hill of Fire

How Pizza Comes to Queens

I Hate English

Jungle Book

King Midas

Legend of the Bluebonnet

The Little Mermaid

Lon PoPo

Madeleine

Make Way For Ducklings

Miss Nelson Is Missing

The Mitten

The Story About Ping

Ming Lo Moves the Mountain

It Could Always Be Worse

2

How Anasi Obtained the Sky God's Stories

The Secret Garden

Witch of Blackbird Pond

Lyle, the Crocodile

Little House in the Big Woods

Island of the Blue Dolphin

Wizard of Oz

James and the Giant Peach

A Christmas Carol

Ferdinand the Bull

Strega Nona

Gone With the Wind

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WARMING UP TO GEOGRAPHY
WELCOME!

Find Someone Who...

was not born in the US _____

vacationed outside of the US this Year _____

drives a "foreign" car _____

speaks an "international" language _____

enjoys international cuisine _____

has a purebred pet _____

has a favorite professional sports team _____

What kind of each pertains to each category?

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